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Kennedy Knew Pigs Bay Plan When a Candidate, Two Claim

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WASHINGTON — John F. Kennedy knew about the planned Bay of Pigs invasion during the 1960 presidential campaign, according to two newspapermen.

The assertion appears in a Look magazine article by Thomas B. Ross and David Wise. Ross is a member of the Washington bureau of the Chicago Sun-Times, and Wise is chief of the Washington bureau of the New York Herald Tribune.

Richard M. Nixon charged in his book, "Six Crises," that Kennedy as a candidate received a Central Intelligence Agency briefing on the proposed Cuban operation.

In 1962, following publication of the book, the White House issued a denial that was supported by Allen W. Dulles, who had retired as CIA director in 1961.

The White House said that Kennedy's briefing by Dulles in 1960 had been general in nature. It said Kennedy "was not told . . . of the training of troops outside of Cuba or of any plans for supporting an invasion of Cuba."

Dulles described the Nixon charge as a "misunderstanding" and said the briefings "did not cover our own government's plans or programs for action, overt or covert."

Ross and Wise do not dispute the White House version of the CIA briefings. But they say Kennedy had knowledge of the invasion plans from other sources.

According to the Look article:

"Exactly what was said during Dulles' briefings of Kennedy . . . will never be known for certain, since the meeting was top secret and unrecorded. But

there is some evidence that Kennedy did not want to be briefed on operational matters — such as the Cuban invasion — because this might have limited his freedom of action.

"In any event, Nixon's dispute with Kennedy and Dulles . . . missed the point.

"Regardless of the content of the CIA briefings, the Kennedy camp had learned informally from other sources that an exile invasion was hatching."

Ross and Wise wrote that Nixon, the Republican presidential candidate, "was hoping for the invasion before Nov. 8" on the theory he would win the election easily "if the Eisenhower administration destroyed Fidel Castro in the closing days of the presidential campaign."

And this, according to the

newspapermen, "was exactly what the Kennedy strategists hoped would not happen."

The abortive invasion occurred in April, 1961.

The magazine article was adapted from a Ross-Wise book, "The Invisible Government," which will be published in June by Random House.